

109TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1041

Honoring the 25th anniversary of Northern Ireland's first integrated school and further encouraging desegregation of schools and teacher training colleges in Northern Ireland.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 26, 2006

Mrs. MCCARTHY (for herself, Mr. WALSH, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. HIGGINS, and Mr. MURPHY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Honoring the 25th anniversary of Northern Ireland's first integrated school and further encouraging desegregation of schools and teacher training colleges in Northern Ireland.

Whereas, since its foundation in 1921, Northern Ireland has had two separate, religiously-based, educational systems;

Whereas Ireland still has segregated teacher training colleges;

Whereas 2006 marks the 25th anniversary of the opening of Ireland's first integrated school, Lagan College in south Belfast;

Whereas currently, there are 58 integrated schools in Northern Ireland: 39 are primaries and 19 are colleges for 11 to 18 year olds;

Whereas 94 percent of Protestant students attend Protestant schools, while 92 percent of Catholic students attend Catholic schools;

Whereas currently 4.6 percent of all pupils—approximately 18,000 students—attend an integrated school in Northern Ireland;

Whereas the cost of running a segregated society amounts to as much as 1 billion pounds a year;

Whereas recently the Government of Northern Ireland refused state funding for four integrated schools, despite an explicit promise in the Good Friday Agreement that such Government would “encourage and facilitate” the development of integrated schools;

Whereas at the same time the Government of Northern Ireland announced the availability of 300 million pounds in building grants for segregated schools;

Whereas in the landmark United States Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court looked at the effect of segregation on public education and held that “[I]n the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”;

Whereas the Taoiseach noted in a March 30, 1999, speech at Hazelwood College in Belfast, “There is a need actively to combat the segregation and exclusion which are a breeding ground for ignorance, intolerance and sectarianism. Integrated education has an important part to

play in promoting partnership and mutual understanding.”;

Whereas, in a speech in Donegal in 2006, Secretary of State of Northern Ireland Peter Hain said, “Two segregated primary schools in a village are doomed to closure where a merger might be viable and produce a higher standard, where separately they cannot. Secondary schools with inadequate facilities where a rational school estate with integrated or shared facilities could produce high quality. . . . The educational future of Northern Ireland must be shared and focused on what unites, or divided it will be bleak.”;

Whereas, moreover, on September 19, 2006, Secretary Hain expressed concerns on the effect of maintaining segregated schools and stated, “. . . these factors have had a dramatic impact on our schools, with 50,000 empty desks across Northern Ireland. We must embrace collaboration and sharing across and between school sectors, allowing children and young people to share experiences and ensuring education spending is going to children in classrooms, not on maintaining empty desks.”;

Whereas the Good Friday Agreement states that “an essential aspect of the reconciliation process is the promotion of a culture of tolerance at every level of society, including initiatives to facilitate and encourage integrated education”;

Whereas by contrast, the goal of integration is to encourage children to understand differences so they begin to understand different cultures and overcome negative stereotypes;

Whereas in a recent study from Queen's University in Belfast, research indicates that educating Catholics and Protestants together in school does have an effect on their attitudes later in life;

Whereas people who have attended integrated schools in Northern Ireland have the potential to create a new political common ground; and

Whereas integrated schools dilute sectarianism: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) honors the 25th anniversary of Northern
- 3 Ireland's first integrated school; and
- 4 (2) further encourages desegregation of schools
- 5 and teacher training colleges in Northern Ireland.

○